

# Abbotsfield School for Boys

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102449
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hillingdon
<b>Inspection number</b>	375348
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 December 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Meena Wood HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of students</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of students</b>	Boys
<b>Number of students on the school roll</b>	595
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	93
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mike Merva
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Bland
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13–14 October 2010
<b>School address</b>	Clifton Gardens Hillingdon Uxbridge UB10 OEX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01895 237350
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 30 lessons, observed 28 teachers, and held meetings with a member of the Shadow Governing Body, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board, leaders and managers, teaching staff, students, and parents and carers. They carried out a number of joint observations of lessons with the school's senior and middle managers. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement plans, a range of school policies, local authority reviews, achievement and attainment data, the schools' self-evaluation and departmental self-evaluations, records of internal observations of teaching and learning, students' books and displays of their work.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Are teaching and assessment practices sufficiently tailored to the needs of different ability groups, in particular, more able students?
- Does the quality of the teaching and the implementation of literacy skills across all subjects extend the learning and progress of students in lessons?
- How good are the levels of students' achievement in English, mathematics and science and is the gap narrowing in the attainment between groups of students?
- How effective are leadership and management in addressing the key issues from the previous inspection?

## Information about the school

Abbotsfield School for Boys is smaller than the average sized secondary school. It has specialist status in mathematics and computing with applied learning. The school shares a site and sixth form centre with a neighbouring girls' school.

The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is low. Most of these students have moderate learning difficulties, or behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. The number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above the national average and most of these are from Black African and Indian heritage groups. The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average.

When this school was inspected in October 2010, it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, it was inspected on two occasions. At the last monitoring inspection, the school was judged to be making satisfactory progress.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. It is an improving school and its overall effectiveness is satisfactory.

When the school was inspected in October 2010, students were not making enough progress. The proportion attaining 5 A\* to C GCSEs, including English and mathematics had been low. This is no longer the case. Students' achievement has significantly improved this year and is now satisfactory overall. Students in 2011 made satisfactory progress and attained results which are in line with the national average. Since the last inspection, the school's senior managers have secured rapid improvements in the key areas. The quality of teaching and assessment, especially in English and modern foreign languages, has improved significantly. Through its strong partnerships, the school has established a personalised curriculum. The leadership capacity of all managers, including the newly-formed shadow governing body, is greatly strengthened. The school's self-evaluation is self-critical and shows that all staff are aware of its strengths and the areas needing improvement. This underpins and supports a good capacity to improve.

The headteacher, along with his senior managers, has worked effectively to address the key challenges arising from the last inspection, with the result that all leaders, including heads of department, now have a much better understanding of the features of good teaching and assessment. Additionally, an effective focus on students' literacy skills has had a positive impact across the school. Inspectors observed good and outstanding teaching in a number of lessons, where students made good progress in their learning. This resulted from clear planning of activities that took account of students' differing needs and abilities. Effective assessment activities, that enabled students to self-evaluate their learning and that of their peers, were coupled with good-quality feedback from the teacher. However, a minority of teachers lack consistency in the detailed checking of students' learning during lessons and marking of their written work. In lessons, where students made satisfactory progress, teachers did not use information about students' prior attainment, knowledge and skills to plan appropriate tasks that extended their learning. This was especially the case for the more-able students.

Behaviour is good as students display respectful behaviour towards each other and towards adults. The majority are well motivated in lessons and respond positively to teachers' expectations of them. Attendance is satisfactory overall. The majority of

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students attend regularly. However, those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities have significantly lower attendance. The school is effectively addressing the levels of fixed-term exclusions and, although these have improved slightly in the last year, the numbers of students excluded are still unacceptably high.

Since the last inspection, tracking of students' progress by senior managers and teachers has improved significantly and is coupled with effective support and interventions for underachieving students in all subjects, but especially in English, mathematics and science. Monitoring by managers and the governing body of strategic and operational areas is good, although the school is aware that, in some instances, actions are not followed through sufficiently rigorously. Internal observations of teaching are focused more effectively on students' learning and progress across subjects. However, teachers and managers do not systematically share best teaching practice that accelerates the learning and progress of individual students, especially those who are more able. Although outcomes and the retention of students in the joint sixth form have improved gradually over the last three years, attainment, in particular at AS level, is low. The school is implementing more robust information, advice, guidance and induction processes in Key Stage 4 and has undertaken a review of the sixth form curriculum to enable students to make the right course choices.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Accelerate students' progress and attainment, by August 2012, through:
  - ensuring learning activities and tasks are well suited to them and create challenge for all, especially those of higher ability
  - improving the quality of teaching across all subjects, especially in science, through checking the learning of all students during lessons and the systematic sharing of best practice.
- Improve the rate of students' attendance and reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions.
- Improve the outcomes for students in the sixth form.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of students****3**

In the last year, Year 11 students made good progress in English and mathematics, in relation to their abilities. However, the school's careful tracking of its students reveals some variation across other subjects, especially in science. Additionally, more-able students do not make the progress that they are capable of in their

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learning. The sharper focus that school leaders now have on potentially underachieving groups, for instance those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and students from Indian heritages, has significantly reduced the gap in attainment for these groups, when compared with their peers in school. Students whose circumstances may place them at risk of being vulnerable, including those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, receive targeted in-class support. Most make at least satisfactory progress. In 2011, students identified as 'school action plus' made good progress.

In a number of lessons observed by inspectors, especially in English, mathematics, history and Spanish, students visibly enjoyed learning, were responsive to well-structured tasks and took responsibility for their learning. When given the opportunities, students worked successfully as independent learners and made good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. In those lessons where students made satisfactory progress, this was because they were not sufficiently challenged in their learning or were not helped to develop their knowledge and skills through well-structured tasks.

Extra-curricular opportunities contribute well to broadening students' social, moral and cultural horizons and help to develop a sense of community. Students participate well in a range of sports activities and they have a satisfactory awareness of the importance of a healthy diet and lifestyle. Students' spiritual awareness is less well developed. There are missed learning opportunities in lessons that could help them explore social and moral ethics in greater depth.

Students' literacy, computing and numeracy skills are satisfactory. For instance, inspectors observed students with effective referencing skills using a dictionary with ease. The school's emphasis on students' handwriting skills, grammar, punctuation and presentation has resulted in improving the quality of students' work. Team working skills are satisfactory and the majority display responsible attitudes. Effective arrangements are in place for the good pastoral support of students. Consequently, students feel valued and safe.

*These are the grades for students' outcomes*

<b>Students' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Students' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of students' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which students feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Students' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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<b>The extent to which students adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which students contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which students develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Students' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The majority of teachers have good subject knowledge and good classroom management skills and use these to inspire learning effectively. Teaching assistants are deployed well in most cases. Questioning techniques do not always check and extend students' skills and knowledge. In those lessons where teaching and assessment activities were well structured and challenged students in their learning, inspectors observed high levels of enjoyment. In most lessons, learning objectives and activities are linked to students' targets and levelled success criteria. However, teachers do not always evaluate students' learning, with a view to reframing tasks and activities, more in keeping with their needs. Therefore, in a number of instances, activities are not sufficiently challenging students' existing knowledge and skills. There are some very good examples of detailed assessment and marking, for instance where students are encouraged to redraft work, but there is some inconsistency in the quality of written feedback and checking of learning in lessons.

The curriculum is personalised with vocational and academic pathways. Good opportunities exist through a wide range of partnerships with work-based providers. Students achieve well in construction, motor vehicle, hospitality and catering, progressing to apprenticeships, further training and employment. The school has significantly improved results in science through BTEC qualifications and the school's specialist status in mathematics has contributed to improved outcomes. However, students are not given sufficient opportunities to extend their information, computing and technology skills for research and independent study. Moreover in lessons, teachers do not enable students to practise their skills using interactive whiteboards.

Effective partnerships with local primary schools ensure Year 7 students make a good start to their education. Satisfactory school-home liaison and contact with a range of services ensure support for those who are persistently absent. Students who are excluded are reintegrated effectively into school and one parent proudly informed inspectors that her son had significantly changed his behaviour and was now a prefect. Students receive regular updates on their progress and parents and carers greatly value the use of link books for information on their children.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
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Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets students’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnership</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and his senior managers have worked purposefully on growing capacity among middle managers through a strong emphasis on raising the quality of teaching and achievement. This is now beginning to transform the learning culture of the school. Delegated leadership and management and staff accountability are now firmly emerging. Greater emphasis is placed on the analysis of performance data by managers to ensure support for underachieving students.

The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning by managers is effective and has clearly contributed to raising staff expectations. However, the school’s internal lesson observations are not sufficiently focused on whether more-able students make the progress of which they are capable and, at present, there is insufficient sharing of good and exemplary teaching practice across subjects.

Support provided by the interim executive board and the more recently established shadow governing body is satisfactory. Members are very committed to raising achievement in the school and have a greater understanding of students’ learning experiences. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory with detailed recording and follow through of procedures. The school’s equalities policy focuses effectively on ensuring that students do not suffer any form of discrimination, but the action plans and targets are not in place. Community cohesion is satisfactory as students demonstrate a satisfactory understanding and awareness of their local and national communities within the global context and contribute well to their local communities during fund-raising activities. Partnerships with a range of external agencies and education providers are strong and have contributed to raising students’ achievement.

The school is aware that it needs to further improve its parental engagement as there is no parents’ forum. Nevertheless, parents and carers who spoke with inspectors say how much they value the school’s personalised care of their children.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities</b>	<b>3</b>

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<b>met</b>	
<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Sixth form

Outcomes for sixth form students in 2011 indicate that the majority of students make broadly satisfactory progress relative to their low starting points. Their attainment in AS examinations has been below the national averages for the last three years, but A-level results have risen to the national average in the last year. In the lessons observed by inspectors, the majority of students enjoyed the activities and many developed sound subject knowledge and skills. However, assessment strategies were not consistently well developed so that students were not always extended in their learning or helped to develop their critical and analytical thinking skills. The curriculum is still developing so that it can fully meet the needs of all students, as a growing number join the sixth form year-on-year. Students reported that they were well supported by their tutors who review their personal learning targets and progress with them. The majority of students leave the sixth form for university, work or further education.

As the sixth form is shared with the girls’ school, the sixth form leader receives good support from senior leaders at both schools. Through a greater focus on the quality of advice, guidance and induction in Year 11, he is addressing effectively the priorities of raising achievement and improving the staying-on rates of students in Year 12.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

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## **Views of parents and carers**

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its students' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its students well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its students.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its students. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Student referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and student referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a student in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the students' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well students acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of students.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets students' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which students are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the students' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**

8 December 2011

Dear Students



### **Inspection of Abbotsfield School for Boys, Hillingdon UB10 OBX**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. As you know, I have visited your school twice and have always enjoyed talking to you. I shall not be returning to your school because of all the improvements the school has made.

My colleagues and I enjoyed this visit in particular and thought you would like to know what we liked about your school and how we think it could be even better.

- You are polite and welcome visitors warmly into your school. Many of you showed us your good behaviour and shared your work with us. The school is now working hard to make sure you all make better progress and you are now reaching higher standards in your work.
- Most of your teachers are working effectively to make sure that all the tasks and activities in the lessons help you to gain more knowledge and develop skills. They tell you how to improve during lessons and how to evaluate your own learning, especially in English. The school offers you a wide choice of courses that prepares you well for your next steps in life.
- Your headteacher and the managers run the school really well. They want to keep on improving it and they and the teachers know just how to do that.

We have asked your school to improve some aspects to make it even better. In particular, we want your teachers to help you to make even better progress in all the subjects, but especially in science, by ensuring all of you have work that is matched to your needs. In addition, you are given more opportunities to work independently and make even more progress in learning, especially those of you who are working at higher targets. We have also asked the managers to help those of you who are not attending school regularly; to work more closely with you and your families so that you do not miss lessons. Lastly, we have asked sixth form managers to ensure that students are placed on the right courses and achieve their full potential in their examinations.

We know that you will play your part in attending regularly and helping your teachers to keep improving the school. We hope that you continue to work hard and we wish you the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely

Meena Wood  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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